

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

March 13, 2007

5:30 PM

In the absence of Chairman O'Neil, the Clerk called the meeting to order.

On motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Smith, it was voted to nominate Alderman Forest Chairman Pro Tem.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Lopez, Smith, Forest, DeVries

Absent: Alderman O'Neil

Messrs.: Jennie Angell, Randy Sherman

Chairman Pro Tem Forest addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Presentation by Jennie Angell, Acting Director of Information Services, providing responses to questions regarding Information Systems current projects.

Ms. Jennie Angell, Acting Director of Information Services, stated I'd like to bring you up on our staffing because I've been doing that every month. We do have an Application Developer who started on February 26th which is really helping out a lot. He's working on HTE interfaces including the interfaces for on-line payments and if you had read through some of the information I had sent over made notice that on-line payments right now how its good for the constituents... they're manual on the backend so he's working on that so we can improve staff efficiency. The paid intern is also doing really well. He's doing much better and getting far more done than I had expected so what I have done is in my 2008 budget I have requested under budget additions because that's what the Mayor said to do...anything that was additional I have requested \$4,000 for next year to have two intern programs...one in the fall and one in the spring. We have this through the tech system out of the University of NH...he's been very productive, I'm paying him \$10.00/hour, he's doing everything, anything, grunt work moving equipment, installing software, installing equipment and it's really helping to augment our staff so I'm hoping to be able to continue this next year. So, with responses to your questions. You had asked questions about the motor vehicle

system and was it an unfunded mandate and the answer to that is the State's position on that is no...the City is not required to do this, we are not required to be an agent and also there is a system that the state provides that we could use but we choose not to because it doesn't fulfill our needs and I have listed down on this response...I can go over them individually if you want on all the different things that the motor vehicle software needs to do that the state system does not do...for instance, we can't check on parking tickets, we can't add special fees such as municipal transportation improvement funds and the other thing that is really big is it does not have a lot of productivity tools or it doesn't work to make most use of the employee's time and I notated...if you remember the infomercial that I passed out a couple of months ago that compared staff productivity in the other communities and the City of Manchester and Keene is using the state system and if you look on the sheet that I included in the packet Keene averages three transactions/hour while the City of Manchester average 10 transactions/hour so this would be a huge problem. I'm sure Joan could answer more questions on that but that's why we really need to do this. Are there any specific questions? The Committee asked when the current parking ticket system was purchased because that was presented as a possible new project. It was purchased in August of 2004, there was a demo...the reason I believe that Brandy Stanley was looking at the system was to get a system that also did parking permits...they looked at a system and at this point in time I believe that they have decided to not go forward with changing the system and they're going to stay where they are...that's my understanding. They looked at it and decided it wasn't in the City's best interests from what I understand and I'm sure Brandy can answer more questions but I think that's a dead issue at this point. Alderman O'Neil had asked for some names of companies that do things such as HTE so I've included a couple here...I'm sure there are others. Normally what we do is put together an RFI and have the vendors come in and tell us what they can do...that is time consuming. If you want more information I can provide that but that's what these do.

Alderman Lopez asked isn't there a Committee on Information Systems.

Ms. Angell replied there's an Advisory Committee yes.

Alderman Lopez asked has this issue been brought before the Advisory Committee?

Ms. Angell replied not that I'm aware of and not while I've sat in this position, it has not met.

Alderman Lopez stated maybe Randy can come up since he was involved with the HTE.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest asked do we know the names of the people on the Advisory Committee?

Alderman Lopez stated I don't know. I think just to bring you up to date Randy I think some of the questions or through the grapevine...some other companies can do this and do that with the HTE system. I just want to make sure that in my own mind that if we have any intentions of moving forward on this we need some expert advice before we just go out there. As you are well aware people have complained about HTE and other companies have said they can do better. So that's why I asked if there was an Advisory Committee that would give us an opinion as to whether we should go out for an RFP to these different companies.

Mr. Randy Sherman, Interim Finance Officer, stated you're talking of replacing the financial system.

Alderman Lopez stated that is what everybody's complaining about.

Mr. Sherman stated yeah, right...HTE only has maybe a thousand municipal customers out there so all the other governments are obviously using something. There are other systems out there. I think actually Concord just went through an RFP process...I'm not sure who they selected but there are other systems out there. I think one thing that has changed from when we did this back in the mid-90's I think at that point we were of the attitude and that goes back to Systems Advisory and everybody that was involved in it was that we had to try to get everybody on the same system. I don't know what IS's position would be in this but I think that technology itself has probably come far enough that that probably isn't necessarily the case anymore and we've seen over the years these other little systems pop up...Airport uses a different system for billing, Brandy is looking at a different...and I'm sure there are others out there and if we went out and did another RFP and we're actually looking at another system I think you could get obviously it would be a major undertaking to integrate all the systems in together but I think we would now have the ability to get more specialized software for specific departments as long as then at the end of the day somebody was able to get them all to work together and I know that's always an issue anytime we bring in another system even when we went out and did credit cards you've got click the gov which is a third-party software but it's offered through HTE but as Jennie said it still doesn't even interface back into the system so they've got to write something to get it to interface back in. But, yeah there are other systems out there. It would be...you're talking years to do RFP's and test them and go through and do that and you're talking millions of dollars to go out and do that.

Alderman Lopez asked is it fair to say that we do upgrade our systems constantly then and we're up to par in the financial field?

Mr. Sherman stated I think what HTE offers...HTE has gone through a lot of growing pains. When we actually bought HTE it was privately owned and it has been bought and sold three or four times and gone public and gone private again and it's been up and down. I think what we have gives us the basic of what we need...are there better systems out there in individual areas I would say yes.

Alderman Lopez stated the complaint that we hear is that it takes so long to make a transaction is there something in the computer world...I don't want to say do something, I don't even know what we're going to do so that's why I asked if there was an Advisory Committee to maybe analyze this a little bit and maybe add something to HTE...I don't know.

Mr. Sherman stated there is the Systems Advisory which is made up of IS and I think the Mayor sits on it and a number of department heads. In all honesty I think we probably...keep in mind we had School at the time...and I think we probably overbought and that's one of the reasons why it takes so long. If we used every component and filled in every field and then used all of the information it provided it would be a great system but we don't do that, we don't have the time, we don't have the need...there's a lot of things...our chart of accounts is like 39 characters long and to be honest with you in Finance we probably use 12 of them...but, all the rest of them are in there because again we had School, we had Water and we tried to blend probably too much together than what the system could handle at that point.

Alderman Lopez stated maybe at some point the Advisory Committee can get together and look at the minuses and pluses and how can we help departments rather than going through all of putting something in and getting something out.

Alderman DeVries stated based on the testimony you've just given Randy and please Jennie jump in if you feel that it's needed...I'm wondering if we should start to define a specific charge for the Advisory Committee and/or a new Advisory Committee to get together and to address a few questions...the first one I think you gave us was whether or not all departments need to be on the same finance system (HTE). The second question would be your last comment is there a way to streamline HTE, jettison some of the extra fields that we no longer use and make the HTE system more compatible and speedier for today's processes and third if we could maybe start to try to get an idea of cost comparisons whether we are better off looking at new finance systems or integrating in a few departments where it makes sense, a whole new finance system that meets Finance Department

needs or if we should look at bringing a consultant in to customize the existing HTE software to make it work with the individual department needs as opposed to buying a whole new software...questions I obviously don't know, I don't even know if these three parameters make sense but based on the testimony I have heard so far it would seem to be at least the beginning of some questions that would be worthwhile answered.

Mr. Sherman stated I agree those are the types of questions that you'd want to lay out and give the charge to the Systems Advisory Committee to start asking. I guess maybe the only question is on a...I'm sure Jennie gives you her list every month of everything she's working on...how do you prioritize that. If it's something that it's really not going to happen do we want to spend a lot of time looking at it or does it move up to the top of the list and we say no we're definitely going to look and in five years we hope to be out of HTE and onto something else.

Alderman DeVries stated if I could follow-up because I don't think that I can tell you whether or not that should be at the top of the list. I think we need...both of your departments and any other department with a vested interest here to tell us if the existing software is so cumbersome and is really costing the City more money we probably do need to know that it would be a valuable priority for us and maybe the first charge would be just to try to at least...it sounds like the Advisory Committee hasn't been around since the mid-90's the last time we did an RFP.

Ms. Angell stated no the Advisory Committee is a Committee made up of department heads and the Mayor and it depends on different administrations use it different ways. In the past Diane Prew had done the agendas and they had met and then some administrations didn't meet all that often so they're more of a very high level...to do what you're talking about we could get direction from the Advisory Committee but then there is a lot of work on the mid to upper management to put this together.

Alderman DeVries stated maybe because our Chairman's not with us today what I would ask is that you consider this until our next meeting and maybe come back and tell us whether or not you think there should be a reconvening and look at this and make a recommendation to us rather than us telling you to waste your time doing something...we know the dollars are scarce and you're absolutely correct we're not going to spend dollars that don't make sense if there's not going to be a cost savings there. So, if there's any level that you want to put a working group together to examine some of the pertinent questions let me know at the next meeting and we'll bring the Chairman up to date at that time.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest stated it's always better to do things when the boss is gone though, Alderman.

Alderman Lopez stated as a follow-up having an Advisory Committee is one thing, having experts from the computer and information world is another thing. I think it might be interesting...maybe the people on the Advisory Committee like I mentioned to Diane Prew one time goes in and tells them that they want a program and that's all they're interested in and that's it. I think we're talking on a bigger scale here as to whether or not we have experts on that Advisory Committee advising you people of the technology out there being sometimes better than what we have.

Mr. Sherman stated the first time the City bought software which was back when Bob Shaw was Mayor we actually hired a consultant to come in and do the RFP and help us with the selection process. The second time we didn't do that and maybe that's why we got the results we got...that may be but I was talking to someone a couple of weeks ago and they're going through this and they have budgeted a million dollars in next year's budget as their consultant to come in and do what you're asking. So, it is an expensive undertaking because it's just a lot of data gathering and time, etc.

Alderman DeVries stated I'm ready to move onto a new subject if you're so willing and it probably doesn't involve Randy but maybe it does...curiosity question...did we have any problems or did it cost us any money to deal with the change to Daylight Savings Time?

Ms. Angell stated I have it listed on one of these new projects...just so you know the Gardner Group estimated that it cost the United States between \$500 million and \$1 billion to do this. We had to update every server, every PC, every time clock, things we didn't know clocks...we did everything they told us to do and there have been bumps...things that the City was either unaware of...for example, on my e-mail I have a standard meeting every Monday morning for my entire staff and everyone had the right time except me so there have been some bumps and we expect some more bumps in a couple of weeks when the normal Daylight Savings Time and again in the fall. We are not...this is what has gone on in the industry so we're not special...Y2K spent years getting ready for and they had a few issues but nothing that was catastrophic.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest asked are there any other questions. If not, Jennie can continue.

Ms. Angell stated the Committee asked for a list of web projects with priorities. What I'd like to do is jump over that and come back with a couple of other things I'd like to update you on and then we can come back to the web stuff and I didn't have all of this information at the time when the agenda was put out so that's why

I'm adding it now. You had asked the last time why the hospitals weren't paying for the wiring that we're doing in the hospitals. The wiring at the two hospitals is for connectivity to the City's network for Fire personnel to connect...this is so the ambulance drivers can get right into the City's network so it's not something that was put in for the hospital. It was put in for the City for the ambulance and most of it was paid for with grant money that was earmarked for that specific purpose but we get involved in it. Telephone options...Alderman O'Neil had asked that one of my future presentations be on telephone systems and options and he had talked about doing that in the spring. I really don't think we're going to be ready to do anything until late summer or early fall unless you're looking for just information on where we are now. Our Verizon contract is up as I said last time around April. The sale to Fairpoint Communications will if it goes through go through at about that time. Verizon has 3,300 employees in the New England area...3,000 of them are going to Fairpoint so they will only have about 300 employees left and our account will go to Fairpoint. So, that's where we're at on that one and will keep you up to date. You'd also asked technical questions about how we're doing our GIS central line...I have some information I can give it to you here, read it...I just got it.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest stated just leave copies with us here.

Ms. Angell stated new projects that we did not have last month that we have got...one of the questions that came up was do we get Board approval for these new projects that come up and it's not really a matter of Board approval. As I said we had the Daylight Savings Time issue and that took a good part of two weeks of my technical staff. We have a new Police Substation that we will be involved with for telephones and wiring, we have the JFK Rehabilitation...they have wires and one other thing that I added was Corporate Roundtable Project for the NET Team. Alderman O'Neil had asked to see what I could do to help the NET Team become better...improve their efficiency, the Mayor had asked...and you have a lot of agencies doing a lot of things and need to communicate with each other and if you want to automate a system you really have to define what the systems are and what they're doing. So, I have spoken with the Mayor and he has asked is there anyway that assistance from some of the universities...but speaking with UNH on Friday they have an intern program called the Corporate Roundtable, it's a Master's level program where we would get...if they accepted our project we'd get a Master's level person for the entire month of June...40 hours-per-week. So, I submitted a project to them to define and analyze our current processes for all of the NET Team participants and how they interface with each other and how they interface with the public as a start to try to automate and see what we're doing. Those are new projects that have come on board since the last time I talked to you. That's a picture of our home page...as you know we do not have a Web

Administrator and so what you will notice on that home page you see over on the right where there's some tabs that say...Services, Quick Links...and we used to have a News tab and the News tab was where all of the new daily news items would be put...that tab is a very labor intensive tab to maintain so that one was pulled off before our Web Administrator left because we felt that it was better to not have something than to have something broken out there. So we don't have News Items...what this means is that when Highway had the snow emergency a couple of weeks ago and they wanted to put notification that there was a snow emergency and you couldn't park in the streets it was buried on Highway's page, we couldn't put it on the front page. I got an e-mail today from two web masters where a constituent was asking where this News tab was because he used to use it so he could find out which side of the street he could park on and it's not there. We got the information on the Senior Stampede...that should be out there...there's no place to put it and this afternoon the Mayor's office asked me to post on the front page information about the School Board member who passed away. I don't have a place to put it because this tab was removed because it's very labor intensive and we just can't put it someplace else on the web there's no place for it. So, that's one of the issues. All departments are publishing their own contents which goes against the best practices...that's like having a publication without an editor...there's nobody to check to make sure there's no typos, there's nobody to check to make sure inappropriate content isn't going out there...there's nobody to make sure that broken links are fixed...department's are doing a good job, they're trying to be very, very careful but everybody is publishing their own stuff...agendas and such. There's no on-going review of the site so we can have stale stuff, nobody's checking broken links, nobody's looking at those...so that's some of the day-to-day stuff that's not happening. New initiatives...the Economic Development office is in the process...they have a new marketing person, marketing initiative, branding initiative and they are actually in the process of signing a contract for a new what they call "stand alone" website...this is for economic development and a lot of communities are doing this because what goes on in economic development sites are frequently those things that aren't really all government so you don't really want it on your government site to have information about businesses, information about real estate for sale, might have information about restaurants and private businesses. So, they've put it on an economic development site and they call it a "stand alone". Now, the City can and the economic development site can make it truly stand alone where it's hosted someplace else and it's an island by itself...can do that. If we do that when somebody goes out to that site and they do a search to find out information on ordinances or what they need to do to register a business...to register a business that's in City Clerk's...they're not going to come up with any links to go to. Ordinances...they're not going to come up with any links because those are on another website. They need to be on the City's website if we're going to have a

truly productive economic website so when a corporation goes out there and looks for economic development stuff and then wants to know okay what do I need to do to register a business and they do a search they will find all of the stuff that the City Clerk has and all the stuff that the Building Department has. But, to do that I don't have...we don't have a Web Administrator at this point in our office.

Chairman Pro-Tem Forest interjected I know Alderman Lopez wants clarification but I have one...I know you're going into this economic development website. I'm not sure...I know we've all been apprised there is a presentation that's going to be made Tuesday, I believe, by members of that office so I don't know whether we want to go into the detail of that website until after Tuesday's presentation.

Ms. Angell stated what I'm saying is if we don't have support on this side one way or the other there are things we can't do with that site and so you're talking about priorities.

Alderman Lopez stated that's the point. If I'm understanding you correctly...when you go to Nashua's website they have a stand alone economic development that they click on and you can still click on any other department. Are you saying they want to do something different?

Ms. Angell replied that is one of the options.

Alderman Lopez stated forget about the option but how is it going to interrelate with the City's website...they don't want to do that?

Ms. Angell stated there are two ways it could be done. One it could be truly stand alone where it would be hosted someplace else...not at the City so the only interfacing would be is you could click on a link that would send it over to the City's website but that's all it does, it doesn't give you searching because it's like clicking from Google to Amazon. It's not integrated. If the population statistics are on the economic site...I go out to the economic site and I get population statistics. If I go to the City of Manchester site and look for economic statistics I won't find any that's if they're stand alone.

Alderman Lopez stated I know that in Nashua you go to the city, click on and everything's right there. If we're going in the other direction I'm not too enthused about that.

Ms. Angell stated the economic development site can have its own name and its own look but still be part of the City site.

Alderman Lopez stated that's what I think it should be.

Ms. Angell stated but to do that we don't have a Web Administrator.

Alderman Lopez stated let them pay for it.

Chairman Pro-Tem Forest stated that's why I think we're getting out of that because I believe there are some presentations that are going to be done Tuesday that may clarify some of the answers to this Committee but I think right now we may be asking some questions that answers are already there and I think we're leading away.

Ms. Angell stated but you're not. The solution is not there because we don't know where we're going.

Alderman Lopez stated let me ask you this question...if they pay for it can they put it on our website?

Ms. Angell replied they can put it on our website but I need a body at my end to do what needs to be done...that's the issue.

Alderman DeVries stated obviously you've had discussions with the Mayor and he's not authorized the release of that position or you're just having a hard time hiring.

Ms. Angell stated I have not gotten any authorization from the Mayor's office.

Alderman DeVries stated so no matter what happens it's going to be a period of time before you are able to get the position released and then advertise and hire.

Ms. Angell stated yes but as least we'd be going in that direction. I guess my point on this list and we can go through each one of the individual projects but the last time I was here you had asked what other priorities and I can't tell you what the priorities are I need for you to help me because the priorities are based on what is important, what do you consider strategic. Are you looking for economic development that will create one set of priorities. If you're looking for constituent service that will create a different set of priorities. If you're looking for staff efficiency that's a different set of priorities or some other focus. Right now because I can't get it all done at the same time...two years ago I would have said don't worry about it we'll get it all done. Right now, I'm not in that situation. So, if you're looking for priorities I need some direction from the Board as to what is important.

Alderman Smith stated I'll give you a priority...staff efficiency. I'm very interested in permits and code enforcements...how we can save the inspector's paperwork if we go to a website. Now, I realize the Mayor hasn't authorized it but they spend so much time on paperwork, on citations and so forth that I think it would be practical to put it in a website and work with technology much better than what they do.

Ms. Angell stated the Corporate Roundtable that I spoke about before is the first step in that. To improve a process the first thing you really need to do is define what your current process is, what it is, why you're doing it, is it necessary are there things you're doing that could be eliminated...so that's why I put this project in hopefully getting assistance from a UNH Master's student for the month of June and June will be here very quickly...who can help us define those processes as to what goes on and to get some outside view of recommendations of things that could be improved. That will help us move forward because we can jump in and try to automate things but there may be some things we're doing that maybe we shouldn't be doing them so why spend time automating them. So, that's the first part of it and that's what I'm hoping this Roundtable will help us do.

Alderman Smith stated the only reason why I brought this up it seems like they spend so much time on citations and paperwork they're not getting out into the field and enforcing the zoning and ordinance regulations.

Ms. Angell stated I understand.

Alderman DeVries stated one of the thoughts I had had when we had the discussion on Building Codes is trying to utilize, if it makes sense, trying to utilize existing technology...bar code readers that has information already there so the individual when he's out in the field, a building inspector sees a violation I understand that there's some customization that he'll have to do but maybe some of the information could be picked up through the bar code while he's in the field...read it into the report and streamline processes that way. I think when we were starting to kick it around we were just trying to see is there a way that we can economize the time spent in the field so that they don't have to retype each time. I understand what you're saying that you have to have somebody come in "A-to-Z" defining the job that needs to be computerized or automated I guess would be a better term.

Ms. Angell stated actually on that we are also working on that front. I have a laptop that has been freed up by someone who is no longer working for the City and we talked about putting a wireless card in it...you can get the Code Enforcement program is done through HTE so we can set it up so they can do

HTE on this laptop in the field. I have talked to Leon about seeing if we can go forward with this and he was working to identify one of his inspectors who would...some people are better able to pick this up...some people are better at it than others so he was going to hand pick someone to go out with this. So, we are also working on trying to do that to see how it would work.

Alderman Roy stated getting back to the direction that Alderman DeVries went and I'm going to go there a little deeper...your Web Administrator...when did they leave?

Ms. Angell replied the last working day of the year.

Alderman Roy stated you would consider that a necessity in your department.

Ms. Angell replied yes.

Alderman Roy asked have you been able to advertise that position?

Ms. Angell replied no I haven't...I don't have approval to fill it.

Alderman Roy stated so it's waiting on the Mayor's office to approve and that's a standing position within your department.

Ms. Angell stated yes it is.

Alderman Roy asked how long will it take you to fill that position once you're given the okay?

Ms. Angell replied it took us a while to find the last one...the Application Developer but I would go after it very aggressively and maybe a couple of months.

Alderman Roy asked would you go after it aggressively because of the importance of the position?

Ms. Angell replied yes.

Alderman Roy stated of the things that you've looked at tonight or discussed how much of a setback is it causing the City not to have that position?

Ms. Angell replied it's considerable. One of the things that is happening...I have a request from the Conservation Commission, as an example...they want to post their minutes on the website and they haven't done that since 2005 and if it

doesn't happen it's not the end of the world and it's not going to lower our crime rate and stuff but something I think is something that should be out there and this person wants to do this. Right now, I don't have...would we get to it maybe, eventually but it's not that high on the priority list but this person wants to do this. So what they will do and they will probably, eventually get it out there but they will talk to this department and that department...they will get it out but they will spend more time getting it out so it's really not a cost avoidance it becomes a cost shifting at a greater cost for a lower quality product is what it is because you don't have the expertise to help them out quickly to get it out there and that's what's happening...departments are doing the best they can but they're having to resize pictures so they don't come out skinny or wide or whatever so they may be spending a couple of hours doing this instead of just sending it over and having the Web Administrator who's got more tools at his disposal to just do it quickly and get it done.

Alderman Roy stated it's their job and they're trained for it and they're educated for that specific task.

Ms. Angell stated yes.

Alderman Roy stated I can't agree with you more and I'll make my second point but I would ask this Committee to send a strong message to the Mayor and our full Board that that position be authorized and filled because it is something that does impact the daily lives of everyone from code enforcement to just going on our website for basic information as a constituent. The second point I want to make in agreement with Alderman Lopez when you talk about stand alone web sites within City government...I'll use the analogy of having the Mall of NH and then driving across the street to the Burlington Coat Factory Shopping Plaza...they're both places you can shop but in the Mall of NH you have one management company, one oversight, one set parameter, one hours of operation per se. When you leave the Mall of NH you stop playing by their rules and using the Mall as the City of Manchester you've got many different things under one roof playing by the same set of rules with the same security and the same guidance. Once you leave that it's no longer in the hands of Information Systems it becomes an outside source many times and we'll see this Tuesday night...an outside cost and sometimes does not represent the values or the positions of the City of Manchester and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. So, I would urge you and I know I'm adding to more burden and workload for Information Systems but I would urge you that if we are to do a stand alone Economic Development site that it's stand alone within our system run by the City not outside of our parameters or outside of our website.

Ms. Angell stated can I add something...we've been working with MEDO and I've been on the team and the vendor who's been selected to do it...they want to work with us, they're more than willing to work with us, they think it would be best in a lot of ways to have it together it's just whether we can bring the resources to the table that we need to do and also we would be able to leverage some of the tools that we've already purchased instead of having to purchase them again. So, economically all the way around it makes sense and they're on board with it.

Chairman Pro Tem asked Jennie is there much more to your presentation tonight.

Ms. Angell replied no.

Alderman Lopez stated just a couple of comments. I think if you work with the Human Resources Director there's no reason in the world why you can't go out and look for somebody...you can't hire somebody.

Ms. Angell stated I don't know can I do that?

Alderman Lopez stated work it out with the HR Director and I'm sure that she can help you.

Ms. Angell stated okay.

Alderman DeVries interjected you can't do that until the Mayor releases it.

Alderman Lopez stated no I disagree with that. Maybe the HR Director would like to comment on that. I think when you're looking for somebody you're looking for somebody it doesn't necessarily mean you have the authority to hire the individual but at least it saves you that period of time unless you don't want to comment.

Ms. Virginia Lamberton, Human Resources Director, replied no comment. With this Mayor what's happened is he gives authorizations at different levels and he has allowed some departments to recruit but not hire and then eventually they get to hire. He expects to give permission at all the levels is my observation and he checks our website to see what's on there and asks us whether or not we've gotten approval.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest stated I know we don't have the authority to tell Jennie to go out and do it but I think we as a Committee can strongly urge the Mayor to allow her to do it at our recommendation and then put the burden back on him because the job is needed I think we can urge the Mayor to do this.

Alderman Smith asked who would apply for a job that is not guaranteed?

Chairman Pro Tem stated I don't believe we're asking her to have somebody apply for the job I think we're asking Jennie to work with HR to come up with a way of doing it...the Mayor still have to authorize it.

Alderman Smith stated you're recruiting somebody to do the job and yet the job is not finalized, it doesn't make sense to me.

Alderman Lopez stated all I was going to say is all that they're asking the Mayor to do is let the HR Director and Info work it out and get applications for those particular positions if he has any intentions whatsoever to fill that position in the future. If we're not going to fill it in the future then forget it but if other departments in the City have been authorized to go ahead but before you hire that individual I want to have the final say so that has been done...all Mayors have done that in order to be ahead of the game of applications and maybe he has in mind that you can have him in the next budget, I don't know. But, I think that we need to move forward if we're looking for the web person to do all of this work. I don't have any problem going to the full Board and going to the Mayor and saying look can she go ahead and advertise for this position if you have the intent of filling it. If he doesn't have any intent of filling it then it's moot, that's it...then I don't know what you do but the other comment I want to make is that you asked a question about priorities. I think that we as Aldermen all have priorities in different areas as to whether or not they're the right priority according to the technical aspect of it I'm not sure but I think what has to be done is you or this Advisory Committee's got to put these things together and say these are the priorities and we need to do this and put a list before the Committee so that we can sanction it and move on as a plan. All these items we've talked about here...not you but we've talked about for a number of years...so I think if it's going to save money, going to save time like Alderman Smith said that might be a number one priority or a number two priority...I don't know. But, unless we have a complete list of what you think is reasonable and the tools that you need in order to get there I don't know how we can make a priority list.

Ms. Angell stated I guess what I can do is I can make multiple priority lists based on what I would consider economic development, staff efficiency...if that's what you'd want me to do.

Alderman Lopez stated I would like that.

Alderman DeVries stated I would replied with staff efficiency I'm not sure making three duplicate lists with different priorities is really necessary. I think we can come in...maybe if you just detail them out and we'll just go through them and rank them and haggle it out that night...you have precious little time to accomplish, so whatever is the most staff efficient mode for you and let us haggle it out here in Committee and have the discussion would be my recommendation. When we talk about authorizing the recruitment and I was ready to make a motion for the strong message to be sent from this Committee and then I had as it was further discussed flashbacks to what happened in this City the last go around when we went out to hire an Economic Development Director and that got caught up in considerable conversation that was very public and I don't know if the HR Director would agree with me or not it was my opinion that because we had such a questionable ability to actually hire a good candidate we lost a lot of good candidates in the process, it got very much in the way of the actual hire and when I heard your comments that you want to go our aggressively finding the right person and bringing them on board I'm not sure you can do that with only the ability to recruit but possibly not make the hire. It's just my thought because it didn't work well for us before. I think we need to have a very strong message possibly even as soon as Tuesday night because I think it will come back up again on Tuesday.

Ms. Angell stated my experience with hiring if you've got a serious candidate who's got strong skills you have to get them on board quickly because they're very marketable and he'll go to the next one and so you've got to start over again.

Alderman DeVries stated if the HR Director or yourself disagree with that.

Ms. Angell stated we can be ready with ads and the whole plan of what we're going to do...we can be ready so when we get the okay to go we just go.

Alderman DeVries stated please do please have everything worked out with the HR Director...if there's any language that needs to be reworked work on that ahead of time.

Alderman Smith stated I'm not a mind reader but I know what your priority is...a Web Master...there's no ands, ifs or buts and it will improve your products on a day-to-day basis. I still get back to the same situation, Mr. Chairman. If you don't put a salary it's up to us to probably sort of mandate to the Mayor saying this is a necessity and it's going to improve Info Systems and it will streamline the project's that she's got down there...you've got some priorities down here...no ifs, ands or buts but I think it all comes down to the Web Master.

Ms. Angell stated yes.

Chairman Pro Tem stated I think we're going to end it on that and one comment before you leave Jennie...you mentioned the Senior Stampede that you're trying to get it on.

Ms. Angell stated I'm sure it will be on the Senior's site but it won't be on the front page. If we had a News tab it would be on the front page of the web site.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest stated I'm just throwing a little plug in there because I know Alderman Lopez and I will be walking...we're both looking for sponsors but we're looking for walkers especially and again Alderman Smith will also be there. With that, thank you, Jennie.

Ms. Angell stated that you for your support.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Discussion relative to Purchasing Division progress and P-Cards.

Ms. Salomone-Abood, Public Works Purchasing Agent, stated I did pass out a memo about what we're doing...an update...sorry it wasn't here before. Just to update you we sent out the copier information...there are still a few departments that are lagging behind with the information and we're making phone calls this week to hopefully finalize and get that completed...spring bids are out and have been mailed. You have a schedule attached to the memo that I gave you to let you know when we're expecting to get those in. Our office supply bid...we've been looking at, we're putting that together and we'll be sending that out soon and we felt that it was beneficial not only to bid their catalogue but to take items such as the copy paper and toner cartridges and fax cartridges because we figured that that was a significant amount of money spent on those that it should be separated from a general office supply catalogue bid. We're asking for the Committee's approval to start gathering data on other cost saving areas such as printing of letterhead, maybe standardizing it throughout the City. We feel that there could be a significant cost savings in creating masters of letterheads and business cards and also looking at maybe custodial supplies as well.

Alderman Lopez stated the only question I have when you say made secondary requests to no avail...is that holding you up?

Ms. Salomone-Abood replied we don't have full results of the whole City. If we're looking to negotiate possible maintenance contracts and say you have 20 departments that you're providing maintenance for if we go forward with that and

don't have information from these departments they're going to lose out, they're not going to be on board.

Alderman Lopez stated that's my question...they're going to lose out but where do you need help at...we don't want your services or we're going to do our own thing...if we're going to lose out as a City, we're going to lose out as a whole. So, what do we have to do in order to have the City Clerk send a memo to cooperate.

Ms. Salomone-Abood stated I'm kind of hoping that by the phone calls I can get it done.

Alderman Lopez stated apparently you haven't been able to.

Ms. Salomone-Abood stated they were through e-mails and reports so maybe by making a phone call and getting in their face we can get it.

Alderman Lopez stated maybe from the City Clerk they can send a memo to all of the department heads to please cooperate with you and get this information so that you can do your job. If the City Clerk could send something out I'd appreciate it.

Deputy Clerk Normand stated we can take care of that.

Alderman DeVries stated just to follow up on that and I'm sure your boss would probably want to chime in on it before we ever take action but if we were looking to make it a little bit more of a dramatic statement about wanting other departments to enjoin in their purchases for group buying discounts we might be able to make a stronger statement through a change in the Procurement Code and I can see Finance taking a deep breath but just the fact that maybe we would even consider looking at that to see if there was a way to tighten there might be enough to hopefully move departments along that have a common bid with you and it's not like we're asking them to redirect all purchasing to you. We're just saying that if there is something that you are putting out to bid here that they anticipate putting out to bid we expect purchasing discounts to be accomplished...that they do that with you rather than an independent bid later on. It's a new idea...this is the first year, it is new for everybody, just keep us advised. Thank you.

Mr. Randy Sherman, Interim Finance Officer, stated it's a spending history by month, by department on the top part of your sheet. There are still four departments that do not have their cards yet...the Building Department, Building Maintenance, Elderly Services and EPD still have yet to sign up and get their cards and we're scheduling those meetings and continuing to go. I will tell you that as far as the rebate goes...just to refresh your memory we need to hit \$5

million on an annual basis and as you see we just crossed the million dollar threshold. A lot of that is obviously due to the fact that we took our time, we phased it in, we brought in a few departments along the way. But, if we keep spending at \$328,000/month it gets us a lot closer and I think as we bring larger departments in such as EPD and Building Maintenance I think we're got a good shot of hitting the \$5 million...certainly not for this first fiscal year but I think as we go into '08 I think we have a real shot at it especially with the fact that out of that \$328,000 there's some good size departments that have very little spending on there...Highway and Police are top winners...they've done an excellent job trying to use their cards. One thing I will say is since Lisa Thibault left what we haven't had a free body to do is to go back through the items that are being paid on the check and see what could have been paid on a card...that was one thing that Lisa was doing for us. So then she would go through and say you purchased this or you paid the *Union Leader* bill on a check...you could have used your card and she was kind of trying to push the department's toward the card and in the last two months we just haven't had a body to do that. But, again, we see a \$100,000 improvement over January. So, the departments are taking a good crack at this. On the bottom of the sheet...just a few of the statistics that go along with this. One of the benefits that we think we're going to get from this is a reduction of your accounts payables checks. Processing checks is a lot more expensive in the Finance Department and with banking fees than with processing the credit card payments so the hope is again to be able to reduce the AP checks. On the second line 630 payments in February were under \$500...those are the ones that it's costing us a large percentage of the invoice to process as a check...that's the number that we want to really try to get away from and reduce that. You can see we processed nearly 4,000 invoices in the month of February, which really accounted for 1,600 purchase orders so it's almost 2½ invoices per purchase order. We do have 245 purchase cards out in departments right now and with that increase up to 245 the usage has dropped down to 30% but again you're going to see that everybody that has a card is not necessarily somebody who buys every month. Again, the Police Department is a classic example. I'd say probably 60-70% of their employees have cards...they have a lot of cards over there but an officer isn't using it every day but when he goes for training somewhere he's got a card and he can use it. We also started back...we've been in front of the Committee since November but back in November we also started offering electronic fund transfers to our vendors...another method of eliminating checks so in essence they give us their bank account information and on the 15th of the month we're ACHing them the money. We had a big jump out of the gate at 108 and since then we have not signed on very many people which is something a lot of the vendors haven't been interested in. But, that's really where we stand. We're meeting with EPD and building Maintenance I believe within the next week and hopefully we'll get them on for the next report.

Alderman DeVries asked are we able to negotiate any kind of a discount of the bid price when we offer an EFT because there's such a rapid turn around...kind of like a percentage of a point off of a loan payment if offered.

Mr. Sherman stated no because with the EFT we're actually giving it to them the same day they would have gotten a check. Normally, we cut and I think I understand your question...we cut checks for the 15th of every month...that's when we typically pay our vendors. With the Electronic Fund Transfers they still get their money on the 15th of the month the only thing we've saved them is their having to go to the bank.

Alderman DeVries stated so a follow-up to that question. So, what you're telling me is that we still make use of the interest rather than sending out the payments out to them early. I'm assuming that you actually calculate and find that that is the best opportunity.

Mr. Sherman stated right. It's saving us time and money.

Alderman DeVries stated that being said if Highway or an individual like that that is making a bulk purchase, a large purchase, if there was a discount because of a quicker EFT return should we be looking at that within the bid process?

Mr. Sherman replied when you're dealing with banking services and depositing checks and cash and all that you're talking pennies a transaction. If they charge me \$.25 cents to process a check through the system and charge me \$.07 cents to process an EFT it's obviously a savings to us because then I don't have to reconcile it and all those other things. But, I'm not sure it gets the magnitude that it would be worth trying to offer a discount to get there.

Alderman DeVries stated a final comment on it and this is just out for discussion at this point I'm not making a recommendation but if I had heard one thing occasionally, not often, but not that I'm in a position to frequently hear it vendors do get upset on occasion because the City does tend to go out a length of time that they consider to be unwieldy and that I think is what I was looking to see. Is there an additional discount that we can see for the City if we can turn around and pay things quickly and does it make sense versus the loss of interest, money and time...that's a Finance decision.

Mr. Sherman stated you're right. If we purchase something from somebody on the 26th of March they wouldn't get paid until May 15th and you're right and that's when they get a little testy on the side but occasionally we do cut checks a little earlier. You're right we could negotiate cash discounts and tell them that we'll

process it within ten (10) days. There are some vendors out there that give us a discount anyway, we still get a 2% discount and that's more of a government discount rather than a payment discount. But, that's one of the places where we've actually tried to encourage them to take the purchasing card because if I buy it on the 26th of the month and I use the purchasing card they'll have their money within a day or two and they don't have to wait that 45-50 days and that's really the issue. A lot of them...again, we have gotten a lot of vendors on and one that you heard right off the bat was Robbins Auto Parts...they give us a discount, they'll never do it, they're doing it. We had to change a little bit of the process with them, we go to statement billings rather than individual but they're doing it and again I think that's just over time we can get there. But, yeah it would have to be pretty significant for us to pay cash.

Alderman Lopez stated you mentioned something, Randy, try to educate me a little bit...you can cross check the checks that have been issued in order to see whether or not they could have been using the purchasing cards.

Mr. Sherman stated no. We can do it, we can go through the list of the check register to see what checks actually got printed and then match that up with the list of the vendors that are taking the card. We can do it it's just that it's a manual process and it takes a body to do that. When Lisa Thibault was in our office she had time to go through and do that. Now I've just got to get another body to be able to do that.

Alderman Lopez stated not to put more work on purchasing but maybe she could come over and do that or you can send the paperwork over and she can do that and whatever work that she does it will be a chargeback to you then you won't need another body.

Mr. Sherman stated I'd love to have Lisa Thibault back.

Alderman Lopez stated you're going to have to get over \$420,000 in order to get that \$5 million.

Mr. Sherman stated I know it's a long way to go.

Alderman Lopez stated people are paying by checks and they should be using the card we're not going to get there if somebody doesn't check it out.

Mr. Sherman stated I will remind you again that when we were originally going through the RFP process they took a list of all of our vendors that were paid in one calendar year...I think it was 2005 and they ran that against the Master Card list

and we paid out over \$40 million in payments to vendors that accept Master Card. So, the volume is there we've just got to get there.

Alderman Lopez stated I'm just looking...it can't be a long process to go through the number of checks and find out whether or not...

Mr. Sherman stated no it's just a matter of flipping pages and going through them.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest stated Randy I'll get you off the hook seeing I'm Chairman for a day...bring the suggestion up to your new boss.

Alderman Smith stated in regard to the cardholders...I imagine the control is with the department heads...you said you have 245 and there's probably 14.5 per agency of cardholders...that seems excessive to me. I don't know why there are so many cards in each different department.

Mr. Sherman stated I'm going to give you an example of the Finance Department. All but one person in the Finance Department has a card. They all reside in our safe so at any time if I need to send somebody somewhere I can pull their card out. Now, on any given month probably not more than one or two or maybe three of the cards actually get used but I have a card for everybody and that's really the attitude like Police has taken. I think that's why you see only 305 of the cards are being used. So, if you do that that's really only one or two cards per department that are actually being used in any given month. It's not a lot that are being used but there are a lot of cards out there but we've told everybody you need to secure your cards...people shouldn't be taking them home on the weekend, they need to reside in the office and pulled out when it's time to use them. But, again, what it does is it eliminates me cutting a check to Southwest Airlines and then to Hilton Hotel, for a restaurant meals and cash advances and it takes all of that out of the process and it's nice...somebody goes to conference it's now all in one place and we've got all of those costs. So it really has helped in that regard.

Chairman Pro Tem Forest stated the federal government does the same thing... they issue cards to all their employees and they can only use them during business.

TABLED ITEM

5. Communication from Mayor Guinta requesting consideration of the establishment of a Department of Administrative Services.
(Tabled 01/09/2007 pending further information from Human Resources.)

This item remained tabled.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman DeVries, duly seconded by Alderman Smith, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee